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ABSTRACT

The importance of dialogue in developing community leadership among diverse groups is described. In the context of South Carolina's Penn School for Preservation, ways communities can create diverse leadership cadres working toward common goals are explored. Common assumptions about the effectiveness of current leadership training methods are evaluated. The Penn Center was one of numerous schools founded by missionaries and teachers from the north in the Sea Islands off South Carolina and Georgia. The Penn Center, on St. Helena in the Sea Islands, traditionally provided support services for the island's Gullah culture for personal and economic issues in addition to literacy education. In 1993 the Center faced a new challenge in sustaining collaboration among environmentalists, cultural preservationists, and local residents by initiating a community-wide leadership process. The Penn School for Preservation, established as a response to community concerns, fostered leadership development for citizen political involvement. A case study of the Center's implementation and work illustrates the potential of leadership development programs for community involvement. (Contains seven references.) (SLD)

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LEADERSHIP COLLABORATION SERIES

Building Diverse Communities

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BUILDING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES is the third in a series of four research reports commissioned by the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, a national program funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, to address problems in smaller American cities. The project and its reports focus on issues of collaboration between public, private, and not-for-profit sectors in communities; profile urban issues in the context of strategies for systemic change; and suggest new models for strengthening communities. The views, opinions, and conclusions reflected in these reports, unless specifically stated to the contrary, are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Pew Partnership, its advisory board, its funder, or its fiscal agent. For more information about the Pew Partnership, write Pew Partnership for Civic Change, 145-C Ednam Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903, call 804-971-2073, or fax 804-971-7042.

Building Diverse Communities

Leadership Collaboration Series

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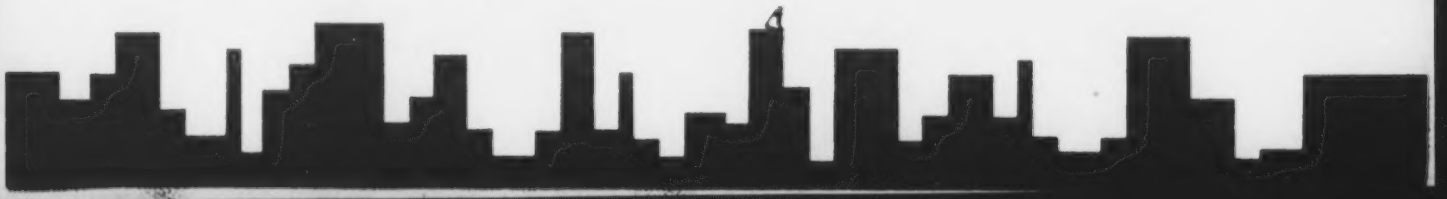

Editor's Note

As America has become increasingly diverse, many of its citizens have begun searching for ways to embrace and build on the strengths of this diversity. The task is not easy. Stereotypes informing our individual judgements often inhibit the kinds of interaction essential to building the commonweal. The answer to this challenge often comes when citizens, of all backgrounds, have the opportunity to work together on real issues. Developing citizens' capacity for this kind of collaborative leadership and action broadens the concept of leadership—making it more inclusive and recognizing individuals' gifts and responsibilities. For the nation to realize its potential as a democracy, all citizens must assume their roles in solving the problems and meeting the opportunities of the present and the future.

James Joseph contends in his book, *Remaking America*, "Although the present leadership climate may appear at first glance to be a leadership vacuum, it is more likely that we simply look in the wrong place for visionary leaders. If we have learned anything from those who are building new societies in Eastern Europe, Central America, and southern Africa, it is that the next generation of leaders is not likely to fit the traditional mold, nor are those leaders likely to be found in traditional places. (225)" Leadership, and especially developing new forms of leadership, remains an urgent need in our country; if anyone is left out or ignored in our democracy, we are likely to further hinder our chances to rebuild our collective life.

The Pew Partnership for Civic Change is helping create innovative, community collaborations between government, business, non-profits, and citizens to address complex issues. In our quest to encourage conversation about civic leadership, we have asked four authors of diverse backgrounds to address the topic of building new, civic leadership approaches within com-

munities. In this essay, Jeanne Porter describes the importance of dialogue in developing community leadership among diverse groups. In the context of South Carolina's Penn School for Preservation, she highlights ways communities can create diverse leadership cadres working toward common goals, and critiques common assumptions about the effectiveness of current leadership training methods.

The other three papers in the *Leadership Collaboration* series examine other, different aspects of developing community leadership. In the first of the series, "Building Healthy Communities," Bruce Adams describes the elements of a healthy civic community, with examples of the contrasts between productive and divisive communities. In the second essay, "Building Deliberative Communities," Michael Briand introduces the reader to the role deliberation can play in creating new opportunities for communities to work together in more productive ways. Suzanne Morse concludes the series by exploring the importance of citizen involvement in creating sustainable collaboratives within communities. We hope you find these four essays timely and helpful, and encourage you to use each booklet as a handbook to encourage both self-evaluation and change within your broader community.

Tonya M. Yoder
Editor

Introduction

Ef oona ent kno weh oona da gwine, oona should kno weh oona come from!

Gullah proverb

If una noh no usai una dey go una foh no usai una kohmoht!

Krio (Sierra Leone) proverb

If you don't know where you are going, you should know where you come from!

Americans believe in leaders and the process of leading. We also believe leadership is the catalyst for community building and community problem solving. Consequently, Americans tend to blame leaders for community declines. The social ills of certain segments of the country—such as the African American community—are laid at the feet of the so-called leadership crisis. For instance, Cornel West, in his best selling book *Race Matters*, describes African American communities' crises and calls for new forms of collective Black leadership.

Traditional leadership styles—where one leader speaks for the group, and mobilizes the group to action—are no longer appropriate by themselves. Old leadership forms are now viewed as elitist, exclusionary, and ineffective. John Brown Childs, in another take on leadership—especially as it pertains to African Americans' historical struggles against oppression—contrasts *vanguard* leadership with *mutualistic* leadership. He explains that in vanguard approaches, elites lift the sleeping masses from

their stupor and call for a unidimensional approach to the struggle. Mutualistic leadership efforts, on the other hand, draw upon indigenous practices, seeking diverse approaches.

Communities and organizations across the country are facing massive problems requiring new ways of seeing these communities and organizations, and indeed new ways of seeing their members. In these times of change, people must bind together and labor together to do the work necessary to build communities and establish community within organizations. In working together, struggling together, crying together, and laughing together, we create a space between us that connects us together. The space between elite leaders and inert followers is distant, tenuous, and empty. The space, however, between humans working together is transformative and filled with their connection.

How we conceive of leadership—as individualistic or collective—affects how we develop leaders. Traditional leadership development focuses on the individual leader's enhancement of his or her personality, skills, or knowledge-base. In the past, leadership development programs have tended to exclude women, and, according to Patricia Bell Scott, to ignore the leadership development models available through traditional institutions like churches, community groups, and families.

Scholars call for a shift in our thinking toward leadership and leadership development, yet few offer new insights into the subject. This report explores community leadership development by

looking at the dialogue necessary to empower such change. This perspective acknowledges the historical divides that have structured race and gender relations, and determined political involvement and power. These historic realities have served to privilege certain segments of the community and exclude others.

Any program aimed at community change must incorporate the means to address the effects of these historical, exclusionary tendencies. One powerful way is to bring diverse groups of people together and create an environment of inclusion, mutual influence, collaboration, and community building for them to replicate in the larger society. I suggest that their dialogue is fundamental for creating and maintaining collaborative efforts.

Leadership is a cultural phenomenon. There can be no recipe or formula for leadership development. Each leadership development experience must be approached afresh and created anew with participants. Each leadership development experience must be customized to address the concrete needs of a given group. One example can be found in the Sea Islands of South Carolina.

Vibrant examples of leadership are found in communities throughout the United States—people working individually and collectively to build everything from houses to forums to opportunities. The experiment in leadership development I am presenting with the Penn School for Preservation will give a great example of how to approach such a project.

The Sea Islands are a series of barrier islands extending along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia to the tip of Florida. The islands are isolated by expansive marshlands, turbulent streams, and broad rivers, with elevations ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet; the region is known as the South Carolina and Georgia low country. About halfway between Charleston and Savannah, in Beaufort County, rests St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Extending fifteen square miles and flanked by several smaller islands, St. Helena Island, as with most of the Sea Islands, has remained fairly isolated from the mainland United States until quite recently.

In what historian Willie Lee Rose called the "rehearsal for reconstruction," former slaves in the mid-1800s were frequently given opportunities to purchase parcels of land to enable them to live independently, and free. After Emancipation, large numbers of the newly freed African Americans remained, building a distinct culture and way of life. Fishermen netted or gathered fish, crabs, shrimp, oysters, and clams, and sold their bounty to local markets. Islanders maintained their own plots of land and grew beans, peas, and cotton. By 1866, Blacks on St. Helena owned most of the Island's land.

Incorporating several aspects of various West African communities, the Islands also developed a discrete language and culture. Gullah culture constituted a distinct speech community including its own language, proverbs, metaphors, folk tales, arts, folk medicines, and songs. Changes on the Island ranging from school system integration to out-migration altered the insulated, culturally dominated communities in St. Helena, forcing them to focus on sustainability issues.

Starting with the construction of the Hilton Head bridge in 1956, real estate development has accelerated on all the Sea Islands. One of them, Hilton Head, developed as an affluent resort complete with shops, restaurants, and other businesses. Some feel that this development has displaced the Island's traditional culture. With Hilton Head only miles from St. Helena, residents prepared for an influx of new neighbors and changes. Resort growth made their county one of the wealthiest in South Carolina, and the coastal counties of South Carolina among the fastest growing of the Southeast. Population figures indicate Beaufort County will double in the next 15 years.

With the area's development into a prime resort location, African Americans who had resided on the Islands for generations began to see some of the disadvantages of change. Real estate development, increased taxes, and zoning laws all affected Island residents. While the promise of jobs associated with the development helped to persuade many Islanders that such change was not necessarily insupportable,

the increase in jobs—many low-paying service jobs—has not increased the quality of life for most Black Sea Islanders. Many long-time residents were concerned that the loss of land threatened the lifestyle and culture they had known for nearly 300 years.

The opposition to certain aspects of change and growth came from several sides. Preservation allies contended that re-developing a service culture emphasized the historical economic and social differences between Blacks and Whites—low-paying service jobs were inadequate incentives for local residents to embrace development. Environmentalists, in turn, were concerned about the impact of rapid development on the coastal ecosystems. Thus environmentalists and cultural preservationists alike launched campaigns to protect the marshes, salt water, beautiful terrain, and indigenous practices that were the hallmarks of the Sea Islands.

Land and cultural preservation issues had to be seen, however, within the broader framework of social change and community leadership. Economic development, too, was a delicate issue that had to be confronted in such a way as to empower the entire community. One of the few studies to explore leadership in a Sea Island community—S. Ottenberg in his article "Leadership Patterns in a Sea Island Community"—questioned the rural Sea Island communities' ability to direct systemic cultural change. Contrary to this depiction, the St. Helena Island community has a story of self-determination and preservation to tell.

The Sea Island communities have been the subject of much scholarly research, especially with respect to their culture and history. Below is an annotated listing of some of the more prominent works.

W. L. Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1964. A sensitive account of the series of events during the Civil War and Reconstruction enabling former Sea Island slaves to become landowners.

T. J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry: Life on St. Helena Island.* New York: Octagon Books, 1978. A lucid history of socio-cultural life on St. Helena Island up through the late 1920s.

M. A. Twining & K. E. Baird (eds.), *Sea Island Roots: African Presence in the Carolinas and Georgia.* Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 1991. A collection of scholarly articles depicting the Sea Islands' contemporary culture and its West African roots.

P. Jones-Jackson, *When Roots Die: Endangered Traditions on the Sea Islands.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987. Charles Joyner, in the introduction, recounts post–World War II threats to Sea Island culture, beginning with the introduction of timbering in 1950, and continuing to the more recent development of luxury resorts. The book itself contains an analysis of the culture and tradition of the Sea Islanders.

The Penn Center

In the search for an appropriate convener for the community's change efforts, the Penn Center, a local institution with both past and present relevance to the community, could not be overlooked. Founded in 1862, the Penn Center was one of numerous schools set up by missionaries and teachers sent from Northern Benevolent Societies. So soon after Emancipation, there was still some question whether former slaves could be taught to live as citizens, but abolitionist supporters viewed education and economic independence as the two key means to ensure Blacks' successful transition from slavery to citizenship. Thus, early Penn Center teachers not only brought literacy to their students, but also provided a support system for a whole range of personal and economic issues. In 1905, the School's focus changed to incorporate Booker T. Washington's industrial education model in its curriculum, and soon came to be considered an international model, providing schooling, training, and on-site services through its health, home, and agricultural extension agents. With the integration of the local school system, the institution was incorporated as Penn Community Services, providing health care, day care, and community development services.

In 1993, another challenge faced the St. Helena Island community, and the Penn Center was once again called on to play a leading role. Preservation allies—including environmentalists, historical and cultural preservationists, and

concerned citizens—joined forces to examine sustainability issues by convening special training sessions in the Penn Center. The Penn School for Preservation thus became a central player in sustaining this collaboration between environmentalists, cultural preservationists, and local residents by initiating a community-wide leadership development process.

The School

The Sea Islands Preservation Project, a partnership between the Penn Center and the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, encouraged Sea Islanders to respond to current changes in their communities. The Penn School for Preservation, the leadership training program and centerpiece of the Sea Islands Preservation Project, aimed to teach Sea Island citizens the methods and applications of community-based economic development, zoning and land use planning strategies, and leadership skills. The School's philosophy was that in creating sustainable suburban and resort development in the Sea Island communities, opposition was necessary, but not sufficient to effect change.

The Penn School for Preservation attempted to demonstrate that a Sea Island community can take positive steps to manage the suburban and resort development that could threaten the lifelong traditions of African Americans on neighboring islands. By creating a shared vision, and developing strategies to influence power

structures and policymakers, the entire community organized itself around the theme of inclusive, sustainable community development.

The St. Helena collaborative hoped to develop a model that could be used in other Sea Island communities. Between 1993 and 1995, two Penn School for Preservation training sessions were conducted. Each session lasted for roughly six months; they convened monthly, with residential weekend portions interspersed throughout the program. Forty community members graduated from the first school. Twenty new participants joined twenty first-class graduates to form the second school. In all, almost sixty Sea Islanders have graduated from the Penn School for Preservation. The School's integrally linked strategies were based on leadership training, sustainable economic development, policy reform, and coalition building.

The Penn School for Preservation then, was a response to several community concerns. Community members had a history of facing abject poverty and political disenfranchisement. Members of these communities lived in relative isolation—although throughout the years, and more so in recent years, many Sea Islanders supplemented their incomes with jobs outside their communities. For the most part, however, community members still maintained an agrarian, rural lifestyle. Most community members also remained removed from the political process. The Penn Center, with its unique history of providing educational guidance, was well placed to serve as a community convener.

Penn School Case Study

As a largely, though not exclusively, African American, rural, community leadership development program, the School confronted intersecting issues of class, race, and gender that had historically presented these communities with distinct challenges. Historically, poor women and men of color had been consistently and systematically rendered voiceless within the dominant political and social discourse in these communities. For instance, at the close of Reconstruction, although Blacks outnumbered Whites by three to one, Black Sea Islanders were not legally allowed to vote. This imbalance in political power and influence continued well into the current century.

Black Sea Islanders maintained the Gullah culture their plantation foreparents had forged together from distinct West African tribes through their relative isolation on the fairly inaccessible islands. Central to that culture was the Gullah language, considered to be a creole or mixture of different languages, and which served all the functions of a native language. Among the Penn School for Preservation's aims was the preservation of the Gullah culture and language and insurance that the story of a people was heard. Establishment of a leadership program in a community with such a rich history was manifestly significant.

Not only was Penn School for Preservation the leadership training component of the Sea Island Preservation Project, it was an inter-eth-

nic, diverse coalition. Women and men of African American and European American descent from environmental, historic, and cultural preservation groups, as well as from traditional Sea Island communities, were members.

The Penn School for Preservation provided a potential model of inter-ethnic coalition building. Patricia Jones-Jackson called for a type of collective effort specifically by African Americans in response to what she termed "the often reckless advance of developers." In fact, in her study of endangered Sea Island traditions, Jones-Jackson noted sporadic attempts to retain Black-owned land and to preserve the Sea Islanders' traditions, but concluded that the Islanders' "adherence to traditional ways had by and large robbed them of the ability to respond to the intrusion with equal and opposite force." Many preservation efforts in the Sea Islands were seen as oppositional, as Jones-Jackson proposed. On the other hand, Cornel West claimed that purely oppositional strategies "were not very effective these days." West suggested that African American communities needed "to come up with a way of making links with those other persons in the larger Black and White progressive communities who are investing their time and energies to create larger spaces for social change. (29)" In the Penn School we saw how a largely African American community built a viable coalition of the sort West called for, and combined effective oppositional techniques with positive community building strategies to face their community's challenges.

"Community" Leadership Development

Two broad categories of people participated in the community's Penn project. First were those who entered the Penn School for Preservation with considerable leadership experience, and already saw themselves as leaders. The School helped hone these people's skills, and broaden their circle of contacts and alliances. There were also quiet community members who usually tried to stay away from leadership positions who participated in the leadership training. It was upon these members that the School had a transformative effect: ordinary community members—citizens who wanted to get involved or saw the need to get involved—were better equipped to participate in their community's affairs because of the School.

In the effort to preserve the unique culture of the Sea Islands, participants underscored several steps necessary to the process of community leadership development, including:

- having an appropriate, inclusive leadership development mechanism;
- coming to an understanding of the power of collective leadership and group effort; and
- being able to identify potential community leaders.

Although individual members had already been active in the community, they had operated primarily as individuals. The collaborative to launch the Penn School for Preservation thus

provided the necessary leadership to bring key individuals together—*not only to train them, but also to facilitate a change process.*

Additionally, the Penn School provided a vital service to the community because, as one participant noted, "leadership percolates up from the grassroots, and does not flow down from some anointed group that has all the answers." However, according to some members, grassroots leadership tended to disband after the coalescing issue had been resolved. Through the Penn School for Preservation, St. Helena built a base level of leadership—"a layer below which [the community] can't fall once that hot issue is no longer current."

Furthermore, participants developed their analytic abilities and expanded their knowledge base. Penn School for Preservation prepared members to take their issues before the County Council or to participate actively in other forums and meetings, to verbalize what their community wanted. For many participants these abilities were the crux of leadership.

In all, the Penn School for Preservation was a distinct kind of leadership development program—one which fostered citizen involvement in the political process, showed political leaders how to be more accessible to citizens, and showed citizens how to operate within formal decision-making arenas. Participants viewed the Penn School for Preservation as more egalitarian and practical than traditional corporate leadership programs, and more inclusive than traditional community leadership programs.

Many participants also noted that they gained a new appreciation of collective leadership. Too often community members saw themselves as fighting as individuals rather than as a group—sometimes making them feel powerless to enact change. Through the collaborative, participants came to see their collective power—that no single person could be successful by himself or herself, but together they could and would envision and enact a new future for St. Helena Island. This belief in the power of the collective provided hope for everyone participating in the leadership training, but especially for the native Sea Islanders.

Finally, many African American members described how the experience helped them realize they could be leaders in their community. In the St. Helena community, traditional leaders were thought to be either political representatives or local pastors. The collaboration underscored the need to recognize and collaborate with other emerging leaders in their community.

Through the Penn School for Preservation's work, a broader cadre of community change agents came to the fore. Many members may never have been labeled as leaders, though they had actively served the community and made a difference in community members' lives. Penn School for Preservation challenged traditional notions of *who is* and *who is not* a leader. It provided committed citizens the opportunity to let their voices be heard, and initiated a process through which other community members' voices could also be heard.

Many people being trained gained a new sense of what they could do and be. The School's activities made members not only hope to be better leaders, but also better persons. For others, the School helped them realize that "leaders aren't born, they're made;" the School helped to make them community leaders.

Community-minded Participants

Penn School members commonly held the view that the collaborative helped develop a collective vision of what they wanted for their community. It was one thing for them to have resisted or opposed particular land-use or expansion plans, but it was quite another for them to have offered alternate plans for their community. Plans to bring their community's vision to fruition were at the heart of the community change process. The Penn School provided an environment for these members to begin working for positive community change.

All participants recognized that the Sea Islands faced potentially massive challenges to their traditions, and concluded that local residents could "no longer sit back to wait for other people to make their decisions for them." Even though many citizens had not played an active role in community change, participants recognized that it was now imperative for them "to play a part in that decision making."

Leadership Training

Leadership lessons were incorporated both explicitly and implicitly into the program, and can be grouped into four categories:

- skill building;
- principles and concepts of leadership;
- personal reflection; and
- action planning.

Skill building components of the program included how to build coalitions with people of different races and backgrounds; how to conduct research using analysis of a given situation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; how to speak in public; how to build public support for a plan; how to make decisions based on community consensus; and how to develop effective communication skills. The leadership model was based on the reality that poor rural communities have thin infrastructures and seemingly few alternatives. Consequently, these communities needed multiple change agents, a critical mass that not only moved toward or worked for change but also became an instant support system.

The Penn School for Preservation equipped members with the requisite skills, tools, and information to begin a community change process. Their vision for the community included establishing a Community Development Corporation to provide economic alternatives for community members, and to assist in providing affordable home ownership options.

Outcome: Sustainable Economic Development

Initially, because some native Sea Islanders in the Penn School for Preservation were against the kind of development they had seen on other Sea Islands, they were opposed to all types of development. Other members believed that economic revitalization was the key to saving the Sea Islands; they reasoned that there must be a way to make a living on the land they valued. These two views were meshed by planning for community-based economic development, in which the community's economic infrastructure could be revitalized through traditional cultural practices, cuisine, and art forms. Furthermore, development would be guided from within the community by community members.

Penn School members developed a comprehensive community development plan for St. Helena by focusing on the Corner Community, a downtown area plagued with economic decline. Within this comprehensive plan were

commitments to renovate the Corner Community and to landscape the adjacent Martin Luther King, Jr. Park; to form a Community Development Corporation (CDC), a credit union, and a small loan fund; to build a public market and establish a food processing facility; to establish a folk art and welcome center for the Island; and to revise the Island's zoning and land-use plan. These economic initiatives would then be part of the "Public Market District."

Each of these initiatives was based on the traditional life-style of Islanders. For instance, traditional Island cuisine will be produced and marketed in the Public Market. Sweetgrass baskets and other traditional art forms will be made and sold through this outlet. These comprehensive plans gave residents of St. Helena a voice in their community's development. Further, they gave St. Helena residents a means to manage the growth on their Island and to benefit from the inevitable tourism, while still protecting the environment and traditions of the Island. Penn School for Preservation members were able to secure $425,000 to renovate and landscape the area to serve as the Public Market District. Additional funds are being sought for market operating costs, the food processing facility, and business incubator build-up and operating costs.

By learning about the options of using skills and knowledge already available in the community, all participants came to support sustainable economic development. By developing a local, economically sustainable alternative, the group lived up to its own highest expectations.

Outcome: Policy Reform

One of this program's outstanding achievements was moving the participants from talk to action. By including issue-related skills development, participants not only learned about technical zoning language and land-use planning principles, but also how to make official procedures work to further their goals. In preparing to contribute to their County's Comprehensive Plan, members learned strategies to achieve their goal of maintaining St. Helena Island's rural character. The community had to protect the Island's agricultural lands and open spaces, and reduce housing densities on the rural residential lands. By discussing downzoning, purchasing development rights, and creating sliding-scale zoning, members gained access to specific and powerful tools to achieve their aims. The Islanders also learned the mechanics of enforcing open space requirements, maintaining road setbacks, and protecting waterfront buffers to protect vegetation.

The land-use planning and zoning principles were instrumental in equipping Penn School for Preservation participants with a new language and way of understanding and seeing their Island home. One participant said she had always believed St. Helena was nice; now she understood why. Penn School for Preservation taught her the mechanics of land-use planning and zoning so she understood the measures—such as housing density and road setbacks—that gave her Island the rural character she loved.

Then she had a way to translate the effect of increased development into land-use terms.

Penn School for Preservation enabled these participants to see things in their Island that they hadn't seen before. It equipped them with a language to describe what they were seeing—a language that had been solely the possession of planners, designers, and politicians. The experience provided personal empowerment and education, but most important, broad-based coalitions.

Outcome: Coalitions

The leadership training available to all participants helped each individual recognize his or her own importance within a broad coalition. The broad cross section of School participants supported the critical lessons imparted about the importance of building and supporting true community change. The participants were particularly proud of the fact that people of diverse backgrounds were involved in the preservation effort. For some African American Islanders, it was exciting to learn that "we have a lot of White people on this Island who are concerned about the future of the Island." Still others felt it was significant to have built a common goal from such diversity.

The cross section also included various occupations and professions—retirees, elected officials, government workers, entrepreneurs and small business owners, domestic workers, and

ministers, as well as experienced and fledgling grassroots community organizers. Even with such a broad range of professional expertise, participants noted that the School's design did not allow any one person to dominate discussions with his or her views or expertise. Diversity added to the sense of collaboration.

The experience also helped participants learn about each other and talk openly about stereotypes and assumptions held by various group members. Many participants credited the diversity training and the evening socializing opportunities with creating an unusually open forum for discussion.

Participants said the diversity session was significant because they were able to openly discuss issues not normally discussed in "mixed" company. The session helped Penn School for Preservation members dispel stereotypes, break down barriers, and openly discuss race and gender issues. Participants got to know each other as individuals, and realized they had common interests and goals and could work together.

Members of the first Penn School for Preservation class also frequently mentioned the residential weekends and evening social gatherings as significant to their Penn School for Preservation experience. One participant said, "I think one of the best things that came out of the School was that we were all required to stay on campus." Group cohesiveness was enhanced by spending time in class together, doing projects together, eating meals together, and socializing together.

The social setting brought people of diverse backgrounds together. It enabled participants who didn't know each other to get to know one another on a personal level. Furthermore, the camaraderie established in the social setting was carried over into the work setting, enabling participants to discuss community issues and their potential solutions more effectively. The sessions helped set a tone that resulted in lasting relationships and close working partnerships.

Training Techniques

The Penn School for Preservation used many techniques to teach the lessons of leadership, community change, economic development, and land-use planning. Furthermore, the action planning aspects of the School reinforced Penn School for Preservation's lessons and were integral to leadership development.

Interspersed between class discussion and small group problem solving were short lectures presenting the conceptual frameworks or principles of the specific topic at hand. For instance, before sharing the common characteristics of leaders, there was a facilitated discussion about leadership role models in the students' own lives. The group discussed people ranging from family members to historical figures, the reasons they considered these figures to be leaders, and what qualities these leaders possessed. Then the discussion shifted to a brief lecture on common traits of great leaders.

Trainers' principles were always connected to participants' everyday life experiences. This was especially useful to communicate extremely technical information on land-use planning and zoning. Learning about the basics of land-use planning began with a discussion of the participants' current or past use of the land. The participants told of hunting and fishing in the rivers and marshes. Trainers then showed that to continue to use the land in these traditional ways, laws must explicitly protect those freedoms.

The larger class was often broken into smaller groups. Class members noted that it was within these smaller discussion groups that they wrestled with information, came to understand course materials, and developed a shared perspective on issues and strategies. Their ideas were then incorporated into a consultant's presentation. Thus class members clarified their common understandings, with their views later validated by facilitators' formal principles.

Trainers interspersed many symbols throughout the course. Early on, participants identified their strengths and the concerns they had about their community. The strengths and concerns were charted, symbolizing that "together all of our strengths can be used to address all of our concerns." Other exercises, using rubber bands, symbolized the tension between the past and the future. The participants learned to think about setting goals that created a certain tension, but were not so ambitious that the motivation was broken, or the goals became elusive and the dream flew away.

Moving from Concepts to Practice

Seven study groups were formed during the first School, and conducted the equivalent of a feasibility study for each assigned topic. The seven groups focused on Community Development Corporations, zoning and land-use, small-scale agriculture, folk art school and welcome center, community credit union, affordable housing, and political empowerment. These groups formed the basis for continued community planning and increased student involvement.

The final presentations covered the values and interests of their strategy; gave a project description; determined long- and short-range goals via a one- and five-year plan; used other successes to explain how their strategy protected the identified values and interests; presented the payoff for the community with emphasis on economic gain; and presented a budget to explain how the project would pay for itself.

These initial plans served as tangible accomplishments to which the first class could refer as *outcomes* of the first class. The Community Development Corporation (CDC) committee, for instance, continued working after the Penn School for Preservation graduation to incorporate the organization and to form a start-up Board. Implementation issues for the CDC were continued into the second class of Penn School for Preservation.

Appreciating Cultural Dynamics

Cultural preservation was at the heart of the Penn School for Preservation. Although not all members of the School were African American—or even native Sea Islanders—participants were keenly aware of their mission to safeguard the unique culture existing on the Sea Islands. Penn School for Preservation participants grappled with how to maintain some of the community's traditions while also debating how to change in order to build a sustainable economy. Participants oriented to the past, focused on the present, and positioned themselves for the future to understand what cultural preservation meant to them. The entire group had to focus on the realities of the past, present, and future.

First, the Sea Islands represented a dynamic African American history; one not necessarily written in history books, but recorded in its institutions, landmarks, traditions, and artifacts. St. Helena was the Sea Islanders' Ellis Island—marking the region where the majority of Blacks entered the country. It was their beginning, and understandably, many Penn School for Preservation participants were determined to memorialize this beginning.

Second, some participants noted that even though "preserving the African American culture was fundamentally an African American business," it was important to all of America. From this viewpoint, America was a multicultural enti-

ty, and Gullah culture could provide a lens into a part of the country that has not always been considered part of mainstream America. The Penn School for Preservation gave the opportunity for diverse expressions of America to be respected, and even celebrated.

Third, many participants saw preserving their culture as necessary for preserving their children's heritage. Safeguarding this culture today may increase their children's likelihood of having a stake in the America of tomorrow. School participants indicated that cultural preservation was a must, not only because of its significance to African American people but also because of its importance to America and its future.

The School increased participants' awareness of the Sea Islands, St. Helena, and Gullah culture. The Penn School for Preservation incorporated "several plays...that addressed the issues," or "that showed what role the different famil[ies] in the community played." Sunday morning sessions opened with "a devotional service from different churches within [the] community," and Penn School for Preservation classes included storytelling and *shouts* from community elders. These cultural practices helped rectify some misconceptions, and showed that community norms, values, and practices traceable to their ancestors were still compelling.

The heightened awareness of and sensitivity to Gullah culture required Penn School for Preservation members to explore its significance within and relationship to other aspects of American culture. Participants were therefore

With the program's focus on cultural identity, participants learned to discuss openly their views on race. Below, participants share poignant moments of the diversity training, recounting the lasting impact of the experience.

"They divided [us up to get] people to understand how other people think. The results were very touching, hilariously funny, and educational about how other people are thinking. You can't have...interracial relationships [based on] stereotypes. People are who they are and they don't fit the stereotypes."

"I think [my most memorable moment in the School] was the diversity training. For most of my life I have been working in the community, but not specifically in the Black community. I think that [diversity training] helped me to look at how Black women see things differently from White women and White men see things differently from Black men. It was an eye-opening experience for me and was very positive for me.

The director concluded: "You can't skate over the issues and get anything real done. People have got to talk about race, class, and gender because if you are going to work together, you have to be allowed to mention the deeper things. And people don't in American society, at all. [Offering a diversity module indicates] not only is it OK to talk about this stuff, but it's the only way we are going to work productively together...it's the reality that underlies all the other stuff about economic development."

very aware of the ramifications tourism had for Sea Islanders. Because they wanted their economic development plans to preserve, but not diminish the culture and people of the community, they carefully weighed the advantages and disadvantages of a solely tourist-based economy.

Conclusion

As with other intense, innovative programs, the Penn School for Preservation exacted a toll from both administrators and participants; it was uncertain whether the School would continue in the future. Fortunately, substantial projects—such as the Community Development Corporation (CDC)—were already underway, ensuring that the community development process would continue, guided by members of the first two schools. St. Helena Island was still confronting difficult issues related to controversial development. However, the community's response to these controversies was no longer only oppositional; citizens now provide their own alternatives and solutions.

The Penn School for Preservation was a community leadership development program serving as a political empowerment group. Participants saw leadership as a viable means of enacting policy change, development methods, and community organizing patterns to preserve the Sea Islands. Analysis of the program also showed that Penn School for Preservation designers and participants saw leadership development pro-

grams as a viable means of establishing a progressive coalition of the sort that Cornel West called for, to address problems in African American communities. Penn School for Preservation produced a number of lessons on leadership and leadership development.

Leadership development programs are viable means of building coalitions to work for community change. Penn School for Preservation brought diverse groups with diverse interests together, equipped them with tools and skills necessary to plan a change strategy together, and gave them the opportunity to begin implementing their vision. Penn School for Preservation leaders became a coalition with the potential to advocate for and draw other Sea Islanders into the preservation movement.

Community leadership development must focus on developing a team of leaders—and not just on training individuals. Team building, group work, and collaboration were at the heart of Penn School for Preservation. Through dialogue, discussion, joint analysis, and interaction, the Penn School for Preservation leadership team developed workable plans for Sea Island communities. Through sustained group work, Penn School for Preservation members developed a collective vision for the future of Sea Island communities.

Leadership development trainers and educators must become facilitators and collaborators with those in the leadership development program. Penn Center directors and staff members joined with Penn School for Preservation partic-

ipants to collect and analyze data, to help organize presentations, and to assist in community organizing. Penn's consultants functioned more as facilitators in a process of discovery than as teachers with the right answers. Status differentials within the Penn School for Preservation were diminished as much as possible, and both School facilitators and members helped with the work necessary to plan for change.

Community leadership development with problem solving goals will face conflict and disagreement. Collaborative efforts were not without conflict or disagreement. However, the School showed the merit of structuring activities to encourage discussion of issues—allowing participants to gain multiple perspectives and mutually influence one another.

Community leadership development programs aimed at changing the status quo must address historical and structural conditions limiting full community participation. The School showed that race, class, and gender issues have to be addressed in the analysis of the broader community and must subsequently inform the plans and goals of any project. Additionally, issues of race, class, and gender were addressed openly so historical realities did not become barriers to movement.

Community leadership development programs aimed at achieving real change must incorporate strategies that both oppose threats to the community, but also offer alternatives aimed at building up and edifying the community. Opposition alone was not sufficient; devel-

oping feasible alternatives to controversial development enabled Sea Islanders to join the community development dialogue.

Just as the Penn School for Preservation was made up of a diversity of social groupings, and St. Helena Island consisted of communities of communities, Beaufort County consists of communities of communities, in which Sea Islanders must be included. Sea Islanders are not quaint cultural showpieces. Black Sea Islanders hail from a rich cultural history giving them a distinct way of viewing the world. Their vision is necessary and must be included in regional community planning. Opposition and conflict are always present within the larger social system. However, the Penn School for Preservation shows that efforts toward harmony, concordance, and unification are necessary. True dialogue will not occur without all of these forces.

The Penn School for Preservation was an example of a community leadership development program based on collective notions of leadership and leadership development. The story of the Penn School for Preservation and its collaborators on St. Helena Island is compelling, and the experiences within the Penn School for Preservation suggest it can be a model for other communities seeking substantive change.

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